

Remembering Harold Washington, 25 Years After His Death

Metropolis Coffee Coming To Midway Airport

Around Town: Warnings

Englewood To Become Urban Farming Showcase?



One of Growing Home's existing farms.

We've written at length about urban farming and community gardening, and we often get the same feedback: That's nice for yuppie shoppers and gardeners, but what does it really do for the city? Well, if the New ERA (Englewood Remaking America) Trail project gets off the ground, there will finally be an answer to that question.

Lori Rotenberk, [writing for Grist](#), broke the story last week - the city and the Department of Housing and Economic Development's Green Healthy Neighborhoods Initiative are in the process of planning [this massive project](#) to redevelop large parts of the South Side. The idea is to create an urban farming district, including the existing large farms owned by [Growing Home](#) and the Pery Street Farm. In a move reminiscent of the High Line and other greening projects, the centerpiece is a disused train corridor.

A former railroad line, the three-mile-long trail will become a linear park with foot and bike trails and farm stands. The area designated as the district begins directly across from the trail, as that's where an estimated 100 acres of city-owned, vacant parcels are located. Over time, they can be converted into farms and other agricultural projects.

There are over 11,000 vacant lots in the 13 square miles of the South Side included in the project. The plan is not to turn them all into gardens, but to use the new farms, the park area and the commerce they will create to begin to rebuild the neighborhood from the ground up. The farms and the green businesses that the project hopes to bring in will create jobs at all different skill levels, scaling up the job-training experience that farms like Growing Home already have.

[Grist has a lot more details](#) on the plan. It's pretty ambitious, but if the city and the community get behind it, we may see a touch of green coming to the south side in the next few years.